1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

252 cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the
262 Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On
264 ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger
[272] one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to accompany it.

273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and
[846] more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong *chi* is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper
[415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary. When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken; the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is transferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

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867 the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I
123 had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come
431 tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson
[576] in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

461 My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some
512 feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

512 The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody
264 gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

to be paid or received; one or two friends may come in to drink *chi* and everybody will sit around and gossip, or perhaps one will tell one of the long stories which take several evenings to repeat. The younger children can listen to the conversation if they wish to; if not they can go and amuse themselves; very little notice is taken of them, and, except possibly for malicious gossip, no subject is avoided because of their presence. A few people own oil lamps, but for the majority the only illumination is the wood-fire. A couple of hours after the evening meal the bedding is brought out of the boxes where it is stored during the day and laid out with the more or less padded wooden pillows at the appropriate places round the walls. People sleep on a cloth, generally quilted, and have another blanket as covering; Lepchas never sleep with their heads under the bedclothes as they think they would then suffocate.

When the bedding is laid out the fire is damped down with ashes and darkness is presumed to reign; people undress more or less, according to their personal habits (most adults remove their outer clothes and sleep in their drawers, but some, especially poorer people who have not sufficient coverings, retain the formerly general habit of sleeping naked near the fire) and settle down in their proper sleeping places for the night. Everybody has his own mattress, but married couples share pillows and blankets. The smallest infants sleep in their mother's arms; but as soon as they are big enough they are given their own bedding, for fear they should wet their parents'. Occasionally a child is placed between husband and wife, but more usually on the far side of the wife. An only or youngest child may sleep beside its parents until it is ten or eleven, but if a younger sibling is born it is placed to sleep either with an elder sibling or some older relation, often a widowed aunt or grandmother. A child usually sleeps in an elder person's arms till about the age of eight, after which, except in the very poorest familes, it usually gets its own bedding; but until marriage unmarried siblings of the same sex usually have their beds laid side by side. Children must always respect their grandparents' bedding, and in the day-time the place where it is laid; and adults must respect the bedding and sleeping-places of their parents-in-law.

Once the fire is damped down and the bedding laid out people are presumed to be invisible and inaudible; but this is merely a social convention, and people can and do tell in the greatest detail just what goes on in the night. Occasionally a young man may wait till everybody else is asleep, and then creep out on hands and knees

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
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partners, who wear only one.* When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces, &c., and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, &c. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated: it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, &c.

In diet, they are gross feeders;† rice, however, forming their chief sustenance; it is grown without irrigation, and produces a large, flat, coarse grain, which becomes gelatinous, and often pink, when cooked. Pork is a staple dish: and they also eat elephant, and all kinds of animal food. When travelling, they live on whatever they can find, whether animal or vegetable. Fern-tops, roots of *Scitamineæ*, and their flower-buds, various leaves (it is difficult to say what not), and fungi, are chopped up, fried with a little oil, and eaten. Their cooking is coarse and dirty. Salt is costly, but prized; pawn (Betel pepper) is never eaten. Tobacco they are too poor to buy, and too indolent to grow and cure. Spices, oil, &c. are relished.

They drink out of little wooden cups, turned from knots of maple, or other woods; these are very curious on several accounts; they are very pretty, often polished, and mounted with silver. Some are supposed to be antidotes against

* Ermann (Travels in Siberia, ii. p. 204) mentions the Buraet women as wearing two tails, and fillets with jewels, and the men as having one queue only.

† Dr. Campbell's definition of the Lepcha's *Flora cibaria*, is, that he eats, or must have eaten, everything soft enough to chew; for, as he knows whatever is poisonous, he must have tried all; his knowledge being wholly empirical.